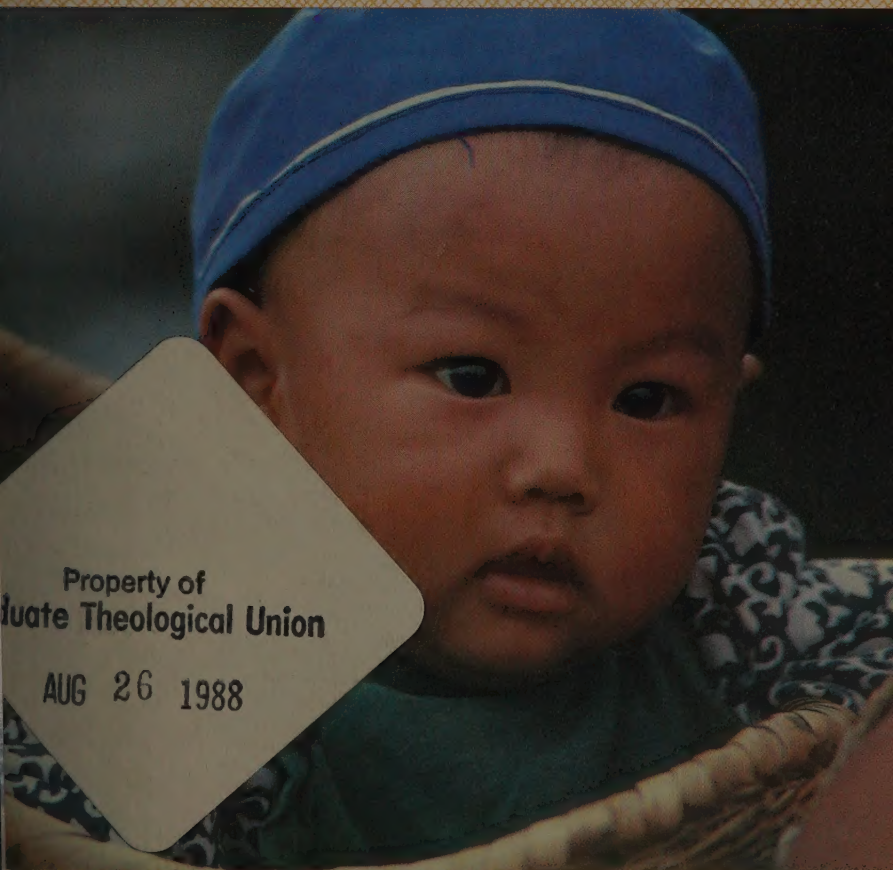


LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

SEPTEMBER
1988



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AUG 26 1988

PROMOTE HEALING
AND WHOLENESS
LITTLE SUNS OF CHINA

FEATURES

THE LITTLE SUNS OF CHINA



Promote Healing and Wholeness

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Allis N. Kersten, whose thoughts on promoting healing and wholeness are found on page 4, is vice-president for communications at Wheat Ridge Foundation, Fargo. Wheat Ridge grants seed money to health and wholeness projects in North America and throughout the world. Kersten is co-author with Louise Williams of **Gifted, Tired, Beautiful Feet: A Bible Study for Women** (reviewed in March LWT.)



Randi Stember Ohlen writes intriguingly ("In the Midst," page 34) about raising a child to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. (See also related article on SIDS, page 32.) She is churchmanship and music coordinator at Trinity Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota, and the mother of three children, ages 9, 3½, and 9 months.



parish deaconess at the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Brooklyn, Ohio, since 1971, **Judy Shek** ("Season's Best") has held general board offices for the Lutheran Deaconess Association and has worked with student deaconesses of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church.



Cefina Nieves Lebrón is associate director for mission development in the Commission for Intercultural Ministries of the ELCA. She has served as synodical president for Lutheran Church Women in the Caribbean Synod, the Synodical Board of the Caribbean Synod, and the Commission for the Latin American Lutheran Church. Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, she now resides in Chicago, Illinois.



LETTERS

Letter to Letter

It came as a shock to read a comment in "Letters" that one reader felt the [LWT] Bible study rated so low in her opinion. In our group of women we have all been challenged by the material as we've worked together through this study.

With what we've considered fine basic material plus being a bit creative on our own, we feel *Arise to Life!* should receive very high marks for quality.

*Ruth Maclay
Dubuque, IA*

Three cheers to Luella Curran of Ft. Collins, CO, for pointing out the elementary material of *Arise to Life!*

Perhaps it is time to realize that ELCA women own such utensils as Bible dictionaries and commentaries and that they are quite capable of providing deeper answers than "What was the disciple's response?" and can hold lively, meaty oral discussions if given a more challenging launching point.

*C. B. Alexander
Rapid City, SD*

Affirming Gifts

The June issue emphasizing our commitment to affirm our gifts is the *best* issue yet. I will soon use "Stewardship of the Apple" for an offering devotion.

*Martha D. Luppold
Connellsville, PA*

I always have difficulty answering the question, "What gifts can you share with us?" Then the July issue of LWT arrived and the answers I can now give are printed in "A 25-cent Friend" and "Free Gifts to Give Anyone, Anytime."

I spend hours in card stores and make frequent visits to the post office for stamps. Thank you for helping me realize more fully my own gifts!

*Lu Moller
Richmond, VA*

Rise Up!

I was very upset after reading "Rise Up, O Men of God" (July LWT). First of all, what we women must realize is that the word *men*, in most hymns, is not meant to discriminate. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, the second definition of *man* is: "any human being, regardless of sex or age; a member of the human race or person."

Secondly, God does not love us any less because we are women. It is really so important that the hymns be changed so as not to "discriminate"? If we change all of the hymns, we might as well change the Bible too. Are we worried so insecure these days that we must even go to religion to show our strength?

Ladies, the issue here is not women's rights, it is religion, and

gion is the way in which we
ship God. The hymns are only a
all part of the worship service.
ybe it is time that we worry
ut our service to the Lord,
ead of how our sex is going to be
roperly represented in the hymn
ks.

*Lei Ellsworth
North Canton, OH*

VER in over 60 years have I, or
ions of others, felt even the
htest twinge of resentment by
minology such as *mankind*, *Son
Man*, or *men* in the song, "Rise
O Men of God," because I have
own both sexes of all ages are
uded.

uge amounts of energy, time,
l money are being expended on
ng to "soothe the wounds" of
ple who choose to whimper (or
wl) over absolutely NOTHING!!
her than make changes, it
uld be spent on education and
rapy for the "tender ones."

*Mrs. Emery Hoegh
Elk Horn, IA*

an article written specifically
ut inclusivity, "Rise Up, O Men
God," I was appalled to find the
ntence, "Parishioners need to see
people—children, women, men,
norities—involved in the life of
e church."

n a society where "the majority
es" the term *minority* implies
ser numbers and lesser signifi-
ce, not a different cultural
ckground to be treated equally.

*Emily Demuth Ishida
St. Paul, MN*

ank you for Betsy Burow's timely
d relevant article. I, too, find
rself increasingly frustrated at
lusive language in hymns, litur-

gies and Bible lesson readings.

Our pastor has recently switched
to an inclusive language lectionary.
Worship has become so exciting!
Instead of leaving angry and
frustrated, I leave having worshiped
in fullness with a community of
believers.

B. Burow is right. The church
needs to be a leader in this one. We
need to wake up and see where our
language has gone stale.

*Stephanie Freund
Madison, MN*

Audiocassette LWT

I am a visually impaired lady and I
am using a V-Tek visual aid to
write to let you know how much I
enjoy LWT on cassette.

The Bible study is so easy to
follow. I love all the stories and the
articles. Thank you for making this
possible.

*Deloris Stenvold
Minot, ND*

It was so inspiring to go to circle
and be able to enter into the discus-
sion. Thank you [for LWT's
audiocassette edition].

*Lois K. Palmer
Granite Falls, MN*

*[Learn how to subscribe to or
support LWT's tape and braille
editions in "Questions about Your
LWT Subscription?" p. 18]*

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PROMOTE HEALING & WHOLENESS

Phyllis N. Kersten

Women and healing go together. It's been that way since the beginning of the church. In the first centuries, deaconesses and widows—an order in the church then—visited the sick in their homes and martyrs in prison. Lutheran deaconesses today continue that tradition of serving the sick and suffering.

It is women who provide the lion's share of the patient care in hospitals, hospices and nursing homes. There are also now a number of women serving as "ministers of health" or parish nurses in congregations in the United States.

But women's connections with healing involve more than those women who—as nurses, doctors, deaconesses, occupational therapists, medical technicians—are involved professionally in health care.

The healing, nurturing women of our lives are also our mothers, teachers, sisters, friends. They mend, store and nurture us physically, emotionally and spiritually.

When Peter's mother-in-law was cured of her high fever by Jesus, she "immediately arose and ministered to them." How like a woman! As like her, we who have felt the healing touch of Christ on our fevered brows are called to healing service in Christ's name.

The Wounds of Christ

Promoting healing and wholeness begins with seeing wounds—the wounds of Christ, the wounds of the world and our own wounds.

"See my hands and my feet, that I am I myself" (Luke 24:39, Revised Standard Version).

That was how the risen Christ identified himself to his frightened disciples and to doubting Thomas at first Easter. He showed his wounded hands and feet.

It is by his wounds that we too, can know Jesus as our Savior, and as our risen Lord. As the one who came through the agony of the Garden of Gethsemane, the cross and the open tomb. As the one who knows and understands our wounded nature, our very real physical and emotional wounds. As the one who is with us, in the midst of everything we face, bringing peace and healing. As the one who sends us, as he was sent by the Father.

The risen Christ, our wounded healer. He sends us, with our wounded hands and side and feet, to those who—like Thomas—doubt and question. The risen Christ, our wounded healer, sends us with our wounds to all the other “walking wounded” in the world.

What wounds in your own life have helped sensitize you to the hurts of a weary world? The death of a spouse? A child with a disability? In addition has it that Thomas responded to the sending Lord by helping to start the Christian church in India?

What wounds have prepared you to serve as a “wounded healer” to other hurting people—if not in India, but in Indiana or California or Alabama?

As Sick

Where do we find the wounded Christ today? We find him, Scripture tells, “in the least of these.”

Who are the “sick” to whom Christ sends us? Are they members of our congregations who are hospitalized in-hut-in? Are they children sick with emotional, physical or sexual abuse? Are they neighbors worried

over an unemployed family member or troubled teenager? Are they out-of-townners with an ill relative in our hospital?

I was sick . . . and you visited me. You came to me in the hospital or the nursing home. You brought me a casserole, you wrote me a letter. You listened to my problems. You sat with me and waited. Jesus says, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these . . . you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40)

Stopping to Help

Promoting healing and wholeness also means being a “good Samaritan.”

Sometimes we see this world’s wounded, left abandoned and half-dead by the side of life’s road. But like the priest and Levite, because of fear, we pass by on the other side.

Jesus asks us, as he asked the lawyer in Luke 10, Who was a neighbor to the person in need by the side of the road? Christ keeps calling us from fear to courage and creativity and compassion.

Probably nothing today frightens us as much as AIDS. Lutheran Social Services of Southern California tells the story of a man who died in 1985 of AIDS that was traced back to a blood transfusion received during heart surgery. His wife, Helen, contracted AIDS from him. A Lutheran, she had taught Sunday school at her church for over 40 years. Yet nobody visited Helen during her illness. Once she spent 16 hours in the bathtub, alone and too fatigued to lift herself out.

There is another way, the way of compassion. “But a Samaritan . . . had compassion and went to him, and bound up his wounds . . . and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” And stopped back later to

pay the bill for the rest of the care (Luke 10:33-35).

People magazine last year profiled a 78-year-old grandmother in Texas who provides hospice care for three AIDS patients in her home. Women at Transfiguration Lutheran Church in the Bronx go across the street to the hospital, and hold and rock and feed babies that have AIDS.

Who do you see, abandoned and left for dead, in your community, as you go down "from Jerusalem to Jericho"? Church women in the Fargo-Moorhead area serve as volunteers in a shelter for homeless families. Church women in Cleveland become "befrienders" of individuals living in a halfway house. Church women contribute money to help feed malnourished children. Church women provide respite for care-givers, work for victim's rights and help ex-offenders.

The Funeral Procession

Promoting health and wholeness means responding with compassion—in at least two different ways—as funeral processions pass us by.

The compassionate Christ was moved by the weeping of the widow at Nain (Luke 7), and restored her son to life. Surely this story calls us to include as part of our healing ministry a concern for those grieving the death of a loved one, or suffering from some other major loss: divorce, loss of a job or of the family homestead. Stephen Ministries is an ecumenical agency that trains lay people for caring service in the parish. Stephens Ministers and other support groups—for widowed persons, for those experiencing a divorce or separation, for women who have miscarried or had a stillborn child, for children caring for a parent—all

these help individuals share the pain and rebuild their lives.

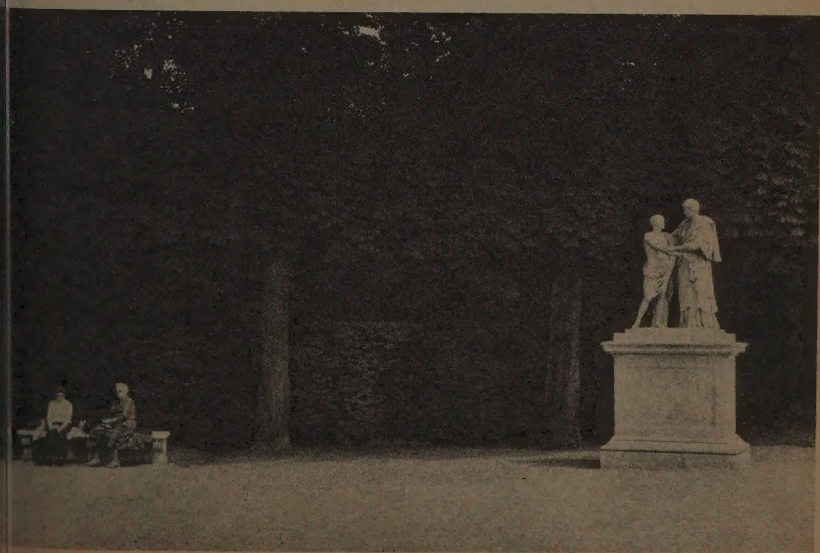
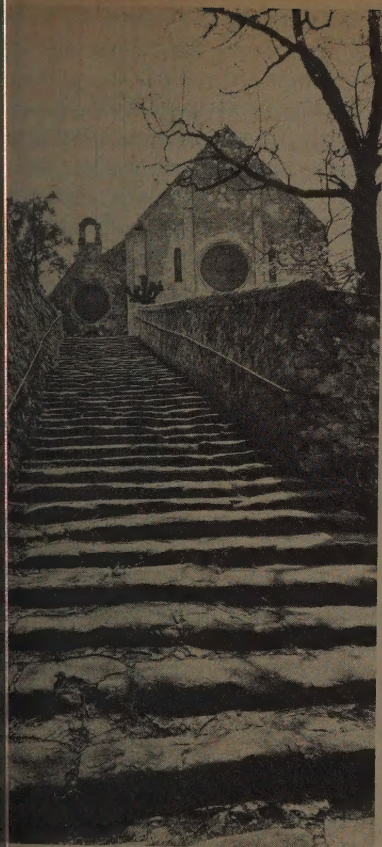
But there is also a second clue in the story of the widow at Nain that help us enlarge our healing ministry. We can assume that the widow's son (like Jairus's daughter and Lazarus) eventually died again. What Jesus did was save them from *premature death*. As Christian women, we too can save others from premature death—by being involved in activities that not only seek to care for those sick, but to *prevent* illness. We work to maintain our health, to glorify God in this temple of the Holy Spirit which is our body. We seek to promote health in our families, congregations, and society at large. We promote health when we support programs and ministries for teenagers and parents. We promote health when we sponsor drug and alcohol education programs. We promote health when we advocate responsible public policy for the elderly.

Called to Wholeness

To be whole, the dictionary says means "to be free of wound or injury; unhurt." To be "physically, mentally or emotionally sound." To be "covered from a wound or injury; restored." To have "all its proper parts or components: complete." To be "broken."

As Christians we work to make people whole, in all those meanings of the word. We go, and help others to go, to the baptismal font and to the communion table where our "wounds" are healed, and we are restored to wholeness.

We nurture our children, each other, and also, ourselves. Like Mary and Elizabeth in the opening chapters of Luke, we need to seek our wholeness through prayer, praise and reflection on God's gifts given



us and through us.

Our church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, is called to wholeness. We hope for a church where all its constituent parts—men and women, black and white, young and old, of every tongue and nationality, those with physical and mental disabilities (and those of us disabled by our lack of sensitivity), rich, poor and middle-class—work together as a whole. A church like this is Luke's vision of what the church should be.

We are concerned about God's good creation, the earth from which we were formed and to which we will return. We work to see that our polluted and poisoned air, ground water and forests might be restored, made whole again.

We spend time with those with physical deformities, mental limitations or terminal illnesses, and we learn from them what true wholeness really is: to lean on and trust in the God who says "my grace is sufficient for you." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Curing and Caring

In *Out of Solitude*, Henri Nouwen talks about the difference between *caring* and *curing*. To care, at its root, says Nouwen, is "to lament . . . to grieve, to experience sorrow, to cry out with."

We want so badly, Nouwen says, to be able to "cure" the illness or problems around us. But there are so many instances where we can not cure—we can only care. We can only care . . . as the world of the person with Parkinson's disease gets smaller and smaller. We can only care, as the world of the man with terminal cancer is reduced from the fields and family and cattle he loved, to confinement in bed, and, finally, a struggle for every breath.

In those times and others, Nou-

wen reminds us, "when we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate our knowing, not-curing, not-healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness."

This kind of caring can promote healing and wholeness. It can even catch a glimpse of resurrection. In the middle of the garden of death.

For there were women who followed Jesus and ministered to him throughout his public ministry.

Others left and hid. But the women followed Christ all the way to a hill outside Jerusalem. They were powerless to help him, but they were there under the cross.

After he died, they followed still to the place where their friend was laid. And because they cared, they returned that first Easter morning with spices, to anoint him for burial.

We follow in the train of the women, named and unnamed, who followed and served Jesus. Wherever they are, we find healing and wholeness under the cross and a message of new life to proclaim. For it comes from the one who is risen, the one who goes both before us and behind us into Galilee.

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SEASON'S BEST

JUDY HOSHEK

How the Sundays after Pentecost, the nonfestival chunk of the church year, do tend to go on. Lacking the solemn drama of the Lenten journey, the expectation of Advent, and the mission thrust of Epiphany, the 15th Sunday in Pentecost can seem like the 95th.

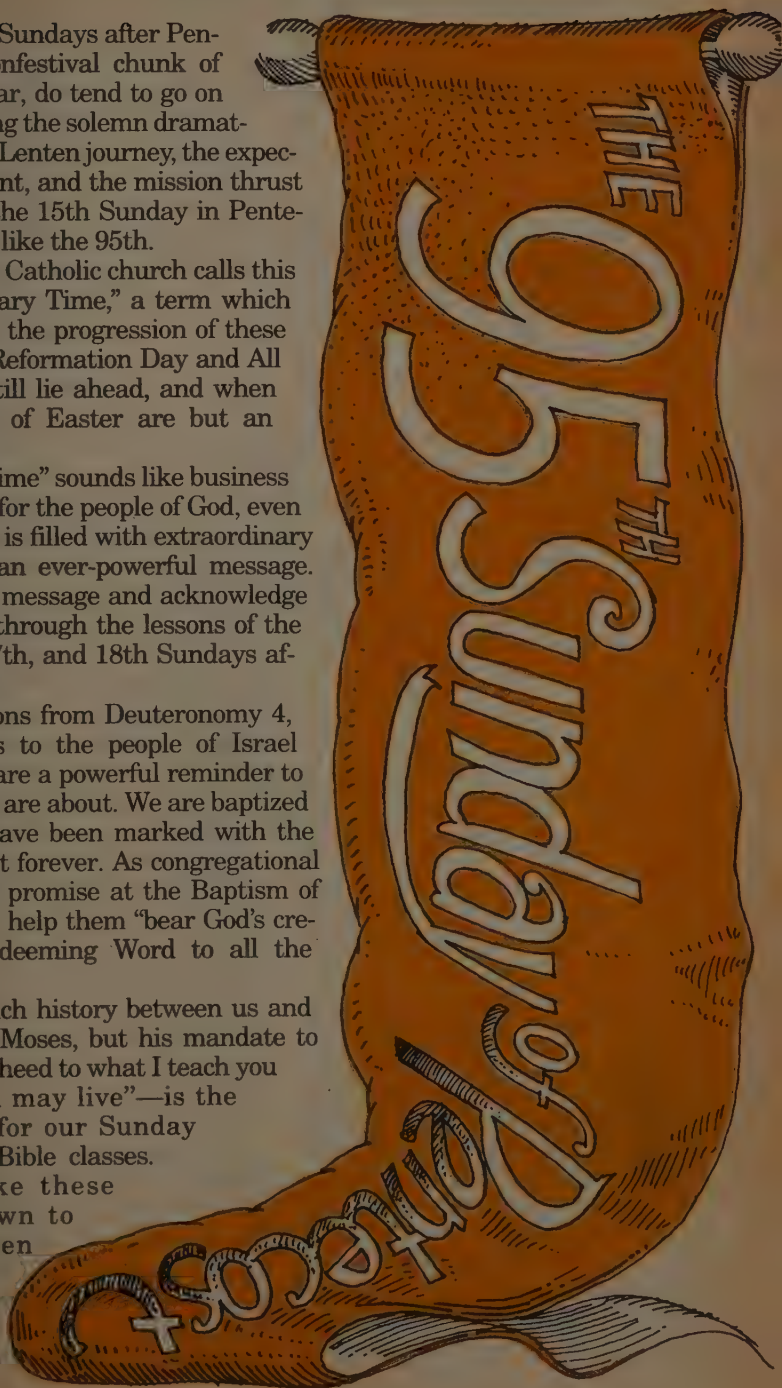
The Roman Catholic church calls this period "Ordinary Time," a term which describes the progression of these weeks when Reformation Day and All Saints' Day still lie ahead, and when the trumpets of Easter are but an echo.

"Ordinary time" sounds like business as usual. But for the people of God, even ordinary time is filled with extraordinary mission and an ever-powerful message. Hear that message and acknowledge that mission through the lessons of the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th Sundays after Pentecost.

In the lessons from Deuteronomy 4, Moses speaks to the people of Israel of words which are a powerful reminder to us of what we are about. We are baptized people who have been marked with the blood of Christ forever. As congregational members, we promise at the Baptism of every child to help them "bear God's creative and redeeming Word to all the world."

There's much history between us and our ancestor Moses, but his mandate to us—"give heed to what I teach you so that you may live"—is the watchword for our Sunday schools and Bible classes.

It is "make these things known to your children and your children's children."



We have the exciting and important task to impart to our children, and to one another, the treasure of God's Word, building up one another in what Paul calls the "whole armor of God." Pentecost is the ideal season for such nurture, as God's Spirit moves among us to equip us for the task.

Ordinary? Yes, in that the charge is ongoing and always before us. But extraordinary in its possibilities and results.

The Epistle of James reminds us that we are to be doers as well as hearers of the Word, and also calls to mind the needs of those who are ill-clad and hungry. When Jesus said, "Ephphatha!" to the man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, we can hear a figurative command to ourselves to "Be opened!" Opened to the mission we have as the people of God to ease the lot of those who are afflicted. These mid-Pentecost

weeks are an opportune time to commit ourselves to some new project of outreach—of visitation or advocacy—in the name of the one who called us to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him. Ordinary? Yes, in the sense that the needs are ongoing. Extraordinary, yes, in that God's Pentecost Spirit empowers even as it challenges us to find our lives in such service.

The appointed Scripture readings for these weeks turn our focus inward as well, reminding us of the sense of self that we as God's people need to cultivate. This is not the attitude the world encourages—that of

looking out for Number One—but rather an encouragement to commit ourselves to be "last of all and servant of all." We know how unnatural that stance is, for we are by nature means immune to the ambitions and passions of the world. This mid-Pentecost season gives us ready opportunity to meditate prayerfully on the servant poems of Isaiah, asking the Spirit to enable us to grasp our identity as the servant who trusts in the name of the Lord and relies upon God.

In our congregation we have

For the people of God, even ordinary time is filled with extraordinary mission and an ever-powerful message.

Pentecost Sunday tradition which is, indeed, appropriate for any time during the Pentecost season. Adults and children gather together during the Sunday school Bible class hour and everyone brings a piece of fruit. Together we dice and slice and chop the fruit to make a wonderful salad which becomes for us a symbol of the church. Each fruit is unique

and delicious, but together the fruit become something more, something new. As we serve the salad and enjoy the delicious blend of textures and flavors, we are reminded that God's Spirit brings us together and works among us to make a new creation.

It is among the gathered people of God where the nurture, the outreach, the meditation take place. Together we hear the Word, administer the cleansing waters, and share the meal—actions that enable us to live out our identity as children of God. This happens regularly, all over the world, even in the "ordinary" time of mid-Pentecost. How extraordinary!

THE LITTLE SUNS OF CHINA

JOYCE DITMANSON

I have such happy memories of being a child in China. My beloved Cook brought me fanciful kites and chewy sorghum candy; my Amah told me wonderful stories of cunning ancient genies and mythical animals and patted me to sleep at night. In Chinese arms I was so loved and cared for. Mine was a privileged childhood, I realize now, as I was a member of a privileged minority—the foreign community. Now in China, four decades and many sweeping cultural changes later, much is different. Unemployment, suffering has given way to stability and peace in China. There are paved streets and high-rise buildings where before there were dirt roads and small hovels. People are adequately dressed, fed and housed. Now all children are a “privileged minority”—especially since China’s policy of one family, one child became forced to combat overpopulation. Chinese call their children *xiaohang*, “little suns,” and they light the eyes of doting adults.

Forty-two years since my own childhood in China, I was able to return. I accompanied a team sent to help some of the children—those “little suns”—whose lives had been clouded over because of a disabling condition.

It happened through Amity Foundation, an organization in Nanjing, China, that connects teachers and medical personnel from North America and other countries to places in China where the people’s skills can be shared. Last year the first Children’s Rehabilitation Center in China opened in Nanjing and was in need of staffing. Amity approached Wheat Ridge Foundation, a Chicago-based pan-Lutheran organization that funds medical projects here and abroad, with a request for a doctor and two therapists to train workers in this field.

I joined the Lutheran medical team that included my husband, Marcy L. Ditmanson, an orthopedic surgeon; Kay Dole, an occupational therapist; and Deborah Wickham, a



Members of the Lutheran medical team: (from left) Joyce Ditmanson, Deborah Wickham, Kay Dole, Marcy L. Ditmanson.

physiotherapist. For Marcy and me it was a sentimental journey to the land where we had been children, where we had met and fallen in love, where our fathers and mothers had lived their lives witnessing to the love of God.

The new Rehabilitation Center stands seven stories high, fronted with gardens of red salvia and golden marigolds. Our first visit there was a formal affair. In a large reception room we drank fragrant jasmine tea out of tall glasses decorated with pandas and bamboo. The director, Qi Ai-huei, asked questions through an interpreter. When Marcy and I responded in Chinese, the ice was broken. Director Qi laughed in relief.

Our tour of the facilities showed us small classrooms with about a dozen children with various disabilities, both physical and mental.

Young women teachers taught the basics with patience and kindness. In traditional Chinese fashion, lessons were shouted out at the top of the lungs! The little chil-

dren sang lustily to the reedy strain of small pump organs.

The most enthusiastic was a tiny boy whose right foot had been amputated in an accident. His disability didn't seem to bother him in the least. He showed off the small blue drawstring bag that encased the stump and scooted all over the place.

In other rooms some treatments were being given. Chinese traditional acupuncture was the preferred method. Small children stood around with needles sticking out like antennae. Acupuncture is used to treat retardation, bed-wetting and the flaccid limbs of patients with cerebral palsy. In another room heliolaser therapy, still in experimental stages in the United States, was being used for torticollis (wry neck), burn scars and tumors.

There were huge sunny rooms with good equipment for modalities therapy, a gift from UNICEF. But most of it hadn't been used yet.

The team started the next day working with 40 doctors and therapists from all over China. Marcy, Kay Dole, and Debbie Wickham gave

es in the mornings and demon-
ated on patients in the afternoons.
er some initial shyness, the class
oyed practicing the healing tech-
ques on each other.

Marcy specialized in the
causes and diagnosis of
disabilities. Lecturing
in Chinese, he gave de-
scriptions of operations
performed to correct de-
formities or improve
function. Debbie Wickham's forte
s in the modalities of physiother-
y. The young interpreter was in-
ested in that, too, and translated
her as the students learned to use
e machines and felt the effects
emselves. Kay Dole loved to work
h individual children, and trans-
ing for her was one way I could be
help.

The brand-new equipment was
packed and dusted off and put to
use as students and the parents
re shown how to exercise the chil-
n's limbs and teach them skills for
ng.

had several conversations with
e young househusband who
rked ceaselessly with his child,
o has cerebral palsy. With the flat
is hand against the child's flabby
; he moved it back and forth,
engthening the weak muscles as
talked. "I try to teach my child all
time, so he will be able to have a
d life. I have been helping other
ilies teach their handicapped
dren too."

he five weeks passed altogether
quickly. At the end there was a
gram put on for us by the chil-
n. In bright-colored clothes,
e-up, and with ribbons in their
; the children danced and sang
h enormous enthusiasm. The lit-
bag-footed boy moved joyously
h the others. China has always



The Chinese
call their children
xiao tai yang,
"little suns," and
they light up the
eyes of doting
adults.

treasured its children, and it is excit-
ing to see the Chinese improving the
quality of life for these "little suns"
with disabilities. Wheat Ridge and
Amity have scheduled two more sim-
ilar seminars in the near future.

*Joyce Ditmanson is a free-lance
writer living in St. Paul, MN. She
and her husband were missionaries
in Chiayi, Taiwan, from 1957-1981.*

LESSONS LESSONS LESSONS LESSONS LESSONS

Susan B. Krass

Two years ago my husband Al and I sat in a favorite restaurant with our then 20-year-old son, Tom. While Tom can't talk much about what he sees or experiences, he let us know how much he liked being out with people.

As we finished, another customer came over to our table, greeted us and asked me: "Are you Christians?"

Startled, I answered, "Yes."

She continued, "What is your son's name?"

Not realizing where the conversation was going, I responded, "Tom."

She said, "I will pray that he gets better and your burden is lifted. Prayer does remarkable things." She then hurried away. Al and I just looked at each other.

That well-meaning woman assumed that Tom was a burden to us, that if he became "well," everything would be fine. Perhaps she believed that we had not prayed enough, or he would be better.

She saw two middle-aged parents and a young man in a helmet, rocking gently in his chair, eating with a spoon, and quietly watching what was going on around him.

She couldn't know what our family life was like, or what Tom, as he meant to us, or what we had learned from him, or how we felt God had blessed us through him.

A little background on Tom. Our older son Michael, now 24, and Tom were born while we were missionaries in Ghana. When Tom was ten months old, he suffered from a form of encephalitis which left him brain damaged and severely retarded. He has a type of epilepsy which is easily controlled and at this time has two to four seizures a day.

Tom lives at home with us and attends a sheltered workshop for severely and profoundly retarded adults.

Tom enjoys helping me with simple household tasks. He likes playing

with tabletop toys, listening to music, hearing stories, going swimming with his dad, walking with us both, accompanying us as we run errands, going to church, having company, and sitting and playing outside. He has some language ability and understands a great deal more than he can say.

When Tom is in a structured environment in which he feels secure, he handles what life has brought him very well. When things are not secure, he is apt to behave the way he might if we were not able to talk about our feelings!

Though some people, like the woman in the restaurant, might focus on what Tom requires of us, in fact Tom has taught us some important lessons.

Tom has taught me that what makes a person valuable is not the economic or intellectual contribution or she is able to make to the community. Every person is valuable. All people are made in God's image. Christ died and rose for all of us. All of us are objects of God's saving will. In daily life, however, especially those of us imbued with the Protestant work ethic, this basic truth can be lost. We are annoyed when people don't perform as we think they "should," when they don't pull their own weight. When we meet a person with a disability, that anger often is turned to pity, but that reaction is also dehumanizing.

It's my conviction that everyone offers something. I've learned, with Tom's help, to look for these gifts, affirm them, and work to see them developed.

Tom has always enjoyed playing in water. Several years ago, on a family vacation in a state park, Al discovered that Tom could dog paddle. Since then we find opportunities

for him to swim not only when we are on vacation, but in neighborhood swim programs or at the YMCA. The pleasure Tom gets out of swimming is a gift to us and to him.

Tom also has a sense of quiet wonder at what goes on in the out-of-doors. The wind, soft new grass, birds hopping and flying close by, the feel of garden stones and earth, sand at the shore, water soaking into the dirt of a flower pot, the sight and feel of fresh snow, the rustle of fall leaves overhead and underfoot. His appreciation of the natural world calls me back to basic things.

We have also learned from the difficulties Tom faces. One difficulty is his limited ability to express himself verbally. He sometimes can give clues as to his feelings or needs. We've learned to read Tom's nonverbal signs. We continue learning to hear and understand him, even when he doesn't speak in words.

This concern to hear not only what is said but also what isn't carries over into other situations and increases my sensitivity to others in their struggle to communicate.

Life with Tom has also taught us the importance of inclusiveness. We always must interpret Tom—his personality, behaviors and needs—to whatever new community we come into. We have discovered that if we act as if Tom belongs, other people accept that and learn ways to relate to him.



Because we have worked hard to have Tom included in our family life, and in the life of whatever congregation or community we belong to, it pains us to see other people left out. For me that includes women; persons of color and those who speak other languages; persons with disabilities; quiet, withdrawn persons; persons who feel they don't have enough formal education, money, or whatever it is that makes one person feel different or excluded from a community.

Living with Tom has also given me an increased appreciation of what people need to live and what is their right to have. All this has sharpened my awareness for the need to work within our political system, and with sensitive advocates. While our society provides for some needs, we still have to struggle for many others.

Tom has also led us to an increased appreciation of community. We have been blessed by supportive families, by congregations of caring people, and by colleagues who understand emergency calls from school, the need to work at home, or change schedules to accommodate long hospital stays and recuperation time.

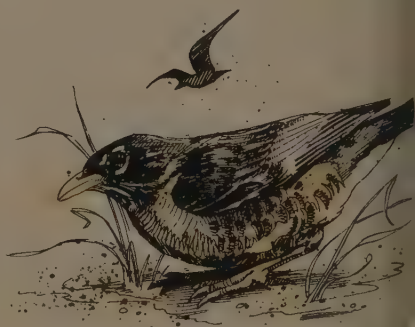
We have learned that without the support others give us, and we give them, we could never have made it. People who try to manage alone when they have an ill or disabled family member usually pay an enormous emotional toll.

Because of Tom, I've increased my ability to accept what is and what can't be changed. I don't waste time or emotion asking, "Why me? Why this child?" I don't lament what might have been.

There is a bittersweet quality to life with Tom, as perhaps there is in any family when it experiences illness, disability, other crises or death.

Because of his illness, there has been pain in many forms, for Tom and for us. Yet I know that what I have experienced and learned from Tom might never have experienced and learned in any other way. Why such things have come to be a part of our lives is a mystery that only God knows. But I do know this: Since this is the way things are for us, God use our lives, our experiences, our circumstances as vehicles for God's grace. According to the apostle Paul, all things work together for good for those who love the Lord.

I have also learned that for me "good" is not wealth or fame or boundless optimism, but a growing realism about and appreciation of people and their circumstances. That good also includes the increasing ability to trust God with my own life and the lives of the people I love.



What appeared a burden to this well-meaning woman in the restaurant is a blessing to us. Tom is a good teacher of many lessons.

Susan Krass, Levittown, PA, is a homemaker, mother and writer who is active in a number of Christian social action concerns.

Brief Prayers On News Items

SONIA GROENEWOLD

Church in China vital and growing

"The apostolic vitality of the church in China is seen in its fervent prayer life and in its growth," said Lutheran World Federation general secretary, Dr. Gunnar Staalsett, after an official visit to China.

Worship, prayer meetings, Bible classes and other activities are held in homes, as well as in more than 1000 church buildings which had been confiscated during the Cultural Revolution but are now reopened.

Thank you, Lord, for the vitality and growth of the church in China.

Lay professionals gather in Washington

Unordained ELCA staff people are gathering in Issaquah, Washington, for the Association for Professional Lay Ministers of the ELCA meets in convention.

The September 25-29 convention includes a clergy-lay panel discussion and a Bible study, as well as an address by Bishop Robert Keller of the Eastern Washington/Idaho synod.

Lord, thank you for committed lay professionals and for their ministries in the ELCA.

El Salvadoran women ask for solidarity

Two women of El Salvador told Lutheran Church leaders in Germany about their war-torn country.

They reported a 70 percent unemployment rate and a 60 percent illiteracy rate among the population.

They described the poverty, hunger, torture, persecution and death in a country where the average life expectancy is 40 years. And they asked Christians everywhere to be in solidarity with them.

Lord, show us how to be in solidarity with our Christian sisters and brothers in El Salvador. Grant them peace.

ELCA schools reach thousands

The ELCA's Division for Education relates to Lutheran preschools, elementary and secondary schools. Total enrollment of elementary and secondary schools numbers more than 26,000; and the count is not yet complete for Lutheran preschools.

Lord, many lives are being reached by Lutheran schools. Guide their teachers and leaders in their ministries.

Sonia Groenewold is news editor of The Lutheran.

Questions about LWT Subscriptions

KEN ROBERTS

Taking out a subscription to a women's magazine may not sound like a remarkable event, but consider what happened to a subscription coordinator for a Texas congregation a few years ago. Although the coordinator had ordered six copies of the magazine for a group of women in the congregation, two zeros found their way into a Minneapolis computer, and 600 copies of the magazine ended up on the coordinator's front porch. The coordinator, a problem-solver of the first rank, gave each woman in her congregation—and many in the town—a free issue.

Nothing that exciting has happened thus far to Lutheran Woman Today subscribers, though 1988 has occasionally been trying and exasperating for some. With the transition to a new women's magazine came the challenge of consolidating two approaches to fulfilling subscriptions, two computer lists, and other

systems that were part of the magazines that were predecessors to LWT.

Six women—three who work full time and three part-time—handle the almost 300,000 Lutheran Woman Today subscriptions for the circulation department of Augsburg Fortress, Publishing House of the ELCA. They recently offered some answers to frequently asked questions about LWT subscriptions.

Q How do I qualify for the group rate?

The group rate (\$5.00 regular print, \$7.00 big print) is offered to women who, through

a group coordinator, subscribe (or renew) at the same time. A designated group coordinator collects monies and submits a subscription list with one check for payment.

Q I joined my congregation after the LWT group coordinator had sent in her subscription list. Can I still be

added to the group list?

The coordinator can add you to the group list at any time, but at the \$6.50 individual rate. The \$5.00 rate is only offered for subscriptions sent together at the initial time or group renewal date.

Subscriptions after the group list has been processed can be accomplished by: subscribing at \$6.50 for 6 issues through the group coordinator (this insures your name being on the group's renewal list); 2) subscribing at \$3.25 for 6 issues (the last

issue will be timed to coincide with the group renewal date), or 3) mailing your \$6.50 individual subscription to Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, bypassing the group process.

Q How can I find out if my congregation has a group that subscribes to the magazine?

Contact your church office and ask who is the subscription coordinator for Lutheran Woman Today. If your congregation is without a coordinator, why not volunteer? Contact Circulation, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440 for materials to help get started.

☐ I want to grow in faith and mission, along with other women. I enclose \$6.50 (\$10.00 big print) for a 1-year subscription.

MY NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ ☐ regular ☐ big print

☐ I want to share LWT with my friend. I enclose \$6.50 (\$10.00 big print) for a 1-year subscription.

GIFT FOR: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

FROM: _____

MAIL TO: Lutheran Woman Today, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440. Make check or money order payable to "Lutheran Woman Today." Add \$3.00 postage for subscription outside North America. For group subscription rate, contact your subscription coordinator.

☐ check enclosed ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

GOOD THROUGH

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MONTH YEAR

Signature _____

(All credit card orders must be signed)

Q

We have formed a new circle of 10 members who would like to subscribe to the magazine. Our congregation already has one group; may we start another?

Each congregation has only one group. Additional new subscribers would be added to the existing group.

Q

If I move during the year, must I wait until the group renewal date in order to effect a change-of-address?

No. Address changes can be made at any time. Either contact the subscription coordinator or notify the

circulation department directly.

Q

If I have a question about my subscription, who do I call?

If you are part of a group subscription, contact your group coordinator.

If you have an individual subscription, call the circulation department at 1-800-328-4648 (1-800-752-8153 in Minnesota) and ask to speak with someone who handles LWT subscriptions.

Q

I'm the subscription coordinator for our congregation. What tips do you have to help me?

Wait for the renewal

LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

ket and double-check the figures before enclosing payment with the description list. Type or print legibly on all forms and use the same name on current LWT mailing labels at renewal time. This eliminates having the circulation department to decide if Mrs. John Peterson and Jackie Peterson are the same person. And finally, remember to include the name and address of the congregation on all group orders.

Q My mother increasingly has difficulty reading the print in the regular edition LWT. What options does she have?

She can receive the big print edition at the group rate of \$7.50 a year, or \$10.00 a year as an individual subscriber. Or, she can listen to the magazine on audiotape—two standard-size cassettes per month—for a \$10.00 year subscription, available through the ELCA Braille and Tape Service, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440.

Q Our congregation has a member who is blind. Is there a brailled edition of LWT?

Yes. It's available free from the ELCA Braille and Tape Service (address noted above).

Q I'm on the go a lot—commuting to work, coordinating church activities, volunteering in the community—and I

find it difficult to read all the stories in the magazine. Although I have no visual disability, can I get the audiotape edition to lis-

ten to in my car or while I take my evening walk?

Yes, but at a rate of \$18.00 per year because of postage and special handling costs that are not a part of subscriptions for persons with visual or other physical disabilities. Your order should be placed through the ELCA Braille and Tape Service.

Q How can our women's organization help make LWT available to more people?

Gift subscriptions are an excellent means of sharing LWT with new congregational members, the first-time subscriber, or for those for whom the subscription cost is a hardship. The gift subscription can be a ministry or evangelism tool to women in colleges, nursing homes, prisons, etc.

Giving subscriptions of the big print or audiotape editions of LWT to visually impaired women is an important ministry as well. Or your group could make donations to the ELCA Braille and Tape Service to help defray the expenses of the costly braille editions which are made available free. (Send donations or requests for the taped or braille editions to the ELCA Braille and Tape Service, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440.)

Consider as well how your group could affirm and support women by providing a subscription for every woman in the congregation for one year. This is a good way to encourage a broad base of participation and include more women in the organization.

The Rev. Kenneth E. Roberts is director of publication services for Augsburg Fortress.



To Stay Awake

Bible Basis: Mark 13:1-37

Study Text: Mark 13:32-37

In the following poem, a woman contemplates the end of her world. Thinking about its end, she wonders what time she would remember best of all the times she has experienced in this world.

The 5:32

*She said, If tomorrow my world were torn in two,
Blacked out, dissolved, I think I would remember
(As if transfixed in unsundering amber)
This hour best of all the hours I knew:
When cars came backing into the shabby station,
Children scuffing the seats, and the women driving
With ribbons around their hair, and the trains arriving,
And the men getting off with tired but practiced motion.*

*Yes, I would remember my life like this, she said:
Autumn, the platform red with Virginia creeper,
And a man coming toward me, smiling, the evening paper
Under his arm, and his hat pushed back on his head
And wood smoke lying like haze on the quiet town,
And dinner waiting, and the sun not yet gone down.¹*

Phyllis McGinley

Discuss this poem together. Why do you think the woman remembers this hour best? If tomorrow your world were torn in two, what hour would you remember well? Discuss your responses. Why did you choose that particular hour?

¹"The 5:32," *Times Three* by Phyllis McGinley. Copyright 1954 by Phyllis McGinley, renewed © 1982 by Phyllis Hay Blake. Originally published in *The New Yorker*. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Viking Penguin.

Read Mark 13:1-37 or Mark 13:32-

Visions of End Times

Mark's story, it is the third day of the week of Christ's Passion (Mark 16:7-9). On this day, at the beginning of Mark 13, one of Jesus' disciples speaks admiringly of the Temple in Jerusalem. In response, Jesus predicts the destruction of that great building.

To faithful Jews living in Jesus' time, the destruction of the Temple would be like tearing their world in two. The Temple was the dwelling place of the Lord, the sanctuary for worshipping the one God. It was the center of their world. Its destruction would seem like the end of their world.

To understand how the disciples and other believers felt when they heard Jesus predict the destruction of the Temple, think of one thing that is the center of your life. What do you think could destroy it? How would you react to hearing that it was to be destroyed?

■ Remember these feelings and reflections as you work through this study. Mark addresses Chapter 13 to three people with such feelings and reflections.

■ When Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple, the four disciples with him have many questions. "When will this be?" they ask, "and what will be the sign when these things are accomplished?"

■ In a response that lasts for the rest of the chapter, Jesus tells about this time of destruction. What will it be like? Read each passage and summarize its description of this time.

2 Mark 13:5-6, 13:21-23.

3 Mark 13:7-8.

4

Mark 13:9, 13:11.



5

Mark 13:12-13.



6

Mark 13:14.



7

Mark 13:19.



8

Mark 13:24-25.



■ These events will occur in a sequence, says Jesus. Read the following passages and note what each says about the relative time of these events.

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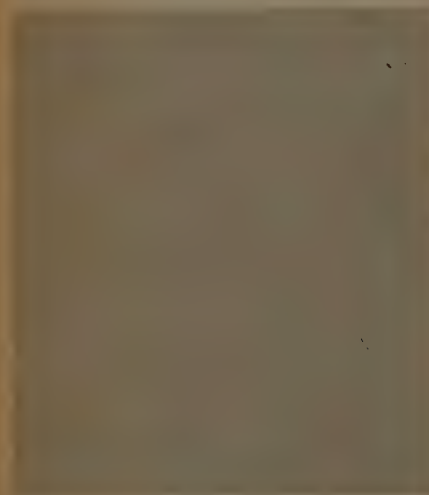
Mark 13:8.



14 Ezekiel 5:9-12. What events do these verses foretell? What will cause them?



15 Daniel 7:13-14. How do these verses depict the events to come?

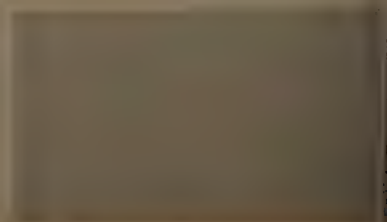


■ Note the similarities between these Old Testament passages and Mark 13 (see questions 2-11 above). Jesus stands in these prophetic and apocalyptic traditions as he speaks in this chapter.

■ Another helpful perspective Mark 13 is a historical one. As we have seen, this chapter describes the destruction of the Temple and the crisis that will follow. Biblical scholars use this material to date the composition of Mark at around A.D. 70, when the Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem. They believe that Mark wrote this gospel to encourage followers of Jesus for whom the temple's destruction was a catastrophic event. Throughout the gospel, and particularly in Chapter 13, Mark seeks to interpret this event.

■ Chapter 13 gives some clues about how Mark's audience regarded the Temple's destruction. While difficult to interpret, such clues imply that these followers of Jesus had expected the end to come when the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70. Instead, Jesus stresses in Mark 13, such a calamity is only the beginning (13:14); there is more to come before the end (13:24-27). This chapter also suggests that these followers of Jesus were expecting the end to come not with the Temple's destruction but then in their lifetime (13:30). Instead, Jesus emphasizes that even he does not know when the end is coming (13:32).

■ Christians in Mark's time struggled to understand the end times just as we do. To such Christians, Mark offers words of hope and exhortation. Let's examine these words of Mark in the following two sections.



The Long Labor

Mark 13:7-8, Jesus says that wars, earthquakes, and famines will happen in the time after the destruction of the Temple. They are not the end, he says, "... but the beginning of the birth-pangs" (RSV).

The image Jesus uses to speak of this time is of a woman in labor.

Reflect on your own labors in childbirth, or those of women you know. What sort of time is the beginning of labor? What are some hard aspects of labor? What can give hope during labor? Or, reflect on any kind of birthing experience (an idea, a vision, formation of Women of the Church, and so forth).

Old Testament writers also compare events to a woman in labor. For example, read Isaiah 26:16-18. How do these verses describe labor? What situation do they compare a woman in labor?

3 While these verses in Isaiah focus on the distress of labor, they also contain an underlying promise. Read Isaiah 66:7-11. What can give hope to God's people who are in labor?

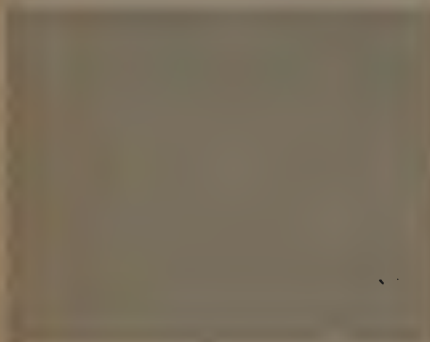
4 Reflect on Mark 13 by thinking of the things that help a woman in labor. If we are all like laboring women, waiting for the end time to come, what can we do to help one another? Recall your response to the first question in "Visions of End Times." How does this portion of Mark 13 give you help in the face of the catastrophe you imagined?

Stay Awake

Throughout this chapter, and particularly in its final paragraph, Jesus exhorts his hearers. The end time is coming, he says, just as a birth comes after a long labor, just as Summer comes after the fig tree puts forth leaves (13:28-29). But, Jesus says, we do not know when it will come (13:32).

■ So what are we to do in the meantime?

1 Read Mark 13:5, 13:9, 13:23, 13:33. What does Jesus say we should do?



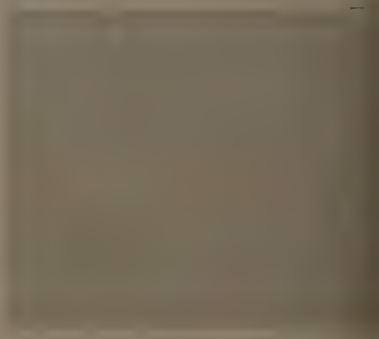
2 Read Mark 13:33, 13:35, 13:37. What are we to do?



3 Read Mark 13:34. How does Jesus describe our situation?



4 Like the servants in Jesus' parable (13:34), you have your work to do until Jesus comes. How can you take heed and watch in your personal and congregational life? In global issues?



■ These exhortations of Jesus provide another clue to the situation of the people for whom Mark wrote the gospel. Such emphasis on staying awake and being prepared suggests that perhaps these Christians, in a sense, fallen asleep. Faced with calamitous events, perhaps the Christians, feeling nothing could be done, had grown lazy, or had given up.

Write a prayer thanking God for the promises of life and encouraging yourself to “stay awake.” Pray it every day for the next week.

Prayer of the Day: Twenty-sixth
Sunday After Pentecost.

Looking Ahead

To prepare for the next study, “Works of Beauty and Betrayal,” read Mark 14:1-52 and reflect on the special work for you to do as a follower of Jesus.

Letter to my Mother

Marilyn Olson

Dear Mother,

You sounded so unhappy on the phone the other night. As you told me your burdens, I found myself nodding in assent, "Yes, I've felt that way."

Remember several years ago, how you were concerned about me when I was feeling so bad? My faith was shaken then. And I told God that if there was truly a God, I'd like to be shown. Maybe it was a prayer of desperation. Maybe it was a prayer of hope. But in time, God did show me.

I have been forced to change some of my ideas about God. I had always been taught that good would come my way—if I was faithful and obedient to God. Yet the depression and anguish of soul I have felt are far from "good" feelings. When Dad's stroke left him unable to speak or respond to therapy, and my father-in-law had a mental breakdown, I began questioning God's goodness. Then our congregation developed some serious problems and I became more confused. Next, some friends proved disloyal and I was left devastated. In my bewilderment, I was slowly awakening to the understanding that the Christian is not exempt from bad things happening in life.

I gradually came to see that God isn't into "paying back" my faithfulness with good health, wealth, or good reputation. My hard times were teaching me valuable lessons. Two years later I emerged convinced that God is loving and unchanging.

One of the biggest lessons I learned was that I could do some things for myself. I could look at life more positively. I could experiment with some things that might make me happier. I was discovering new things about God's will.

I began making some choices. Guess what? Some very good things happened. When I decided to enroll in college courses and take on a part-time job at a country market, my confidence level began to soar. Purpose and meaning began to trickle into some parched areas of my soul. I was "doing for myself." It felt great, at the same time I felt I was following God's will and bringing pleasure to him.

Later I realized that in those new choices, I was following some very good advice I'd heard given by Ruth Carter Stapleton: "God will not do for you what you are able to do for yourself."

I remember an illustration I once heard about Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The Lord God said that they could eat of the fruits with the exception of one tree. Only one was to be avoided—and multitudes of varieties of other fruits were available to them.

I like to think that the variety of choices given Adam and Eve is like the variety of choices we have in our lives, with the same warning—for our own good—to stay within God's boundaries.

I used to be the kind of Christian who would run to God with every little concern because I wanted to be right and never make a mistake. I would ask, "Lord, should I pick the pear, the peach, or the nectarine? Will you show me which is ripe? Just what exactly should I do?" In my case I feel that God finally quit answering me—for my own good—so that I would grow up, think for myself and enjoy the fruits of my decisions and desires.

I am confident of God's unconditional love for us. With Psalm 37:4, I agree that we are to "Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart."

Mother, you said something last time on the phone that I have often heard myself say the past few years: "I wish I didn't take things so seriously; I wish I could laugh more." Do you remember last year when I visited you? We went antique shopping and you bought me the embroidered plaque that reads: "The most wasted day of all is that on which you have not laughed."

Your colorful gift hangs in the kitchen, where I can see it daily and run a mental check, "Have I laughed today?" Then I think about what I laughed at, and laugh some more! I need that message, because my tendency is to take life too seriously. Mom, you and I both battle with the negative side of things and with worry, and with the bad things that could happen. In the last few years, I have made a purposeful effort to lighten up, enjoy God, my family, and myself more.

I am touched weekly during worship when we repeat the Lord's Prayer. This model prayer has a beautiful, simple prescription for keeping life in perspective. Powerful and direct, it reminds us to bring our worship and adoration to God, who has vast abilities. We want God's will to be done on this earth. Simply, we can expect daily sustenance. Imperatively, we must forgive those who offend as God is constant in forgiving us. We recognize that God is the source of deliverance from temptation, and the very deliverance from the evil one. That's all—one prayer covers everything relevant to daily life!

I have written this letter because I want you to know that I understand many of your feelings. Even when you don't feel God's presence, God is still there and near. Yes, there can be most painful times, and how we would like to avoid the pain! But through difficulties, we are changed people and are more adequately prepared to face—and enjoy—the life ahead of us. Our prayers are with you daily. I love you."

Illyn Olson, Hesperus, CO, is a free-lance writer and mother of four children. She currently works for a nonprofit agency coordinating teen backpack trips, bicycle tours and work projects into

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

Jean Guarino

When Diane and Steve Bower went to awaken their month-old daughter Christina one morning, they found she wasn't breathing and was cold and limp. Five-month-old John Nugent could not be roused from his afternoon nap; his mother found him in his crib not breathing, with his blankets in slight disarray.

Two per 1,000

These two apparently healthy children represent the two out of every 1,000 live-birth infants in the United States who were put to bed without the slightest suspicion that anything was awry, only to be found lifeless a few hours later.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or "crib death," is the sudden death of any infant which cannot be explained by prior medical history or post-mortem examination. Most infants who die of SIDS are between the ages of one month and one year. They usually succumb during their

normal sleeping period and have had symptoms of a mild cold or sniffles.

Naming SIDS

The term "Sudden Infant Death Syndrome" was coined in 1969 by Dr. Bruce Beckwith, a pediatric pathologist who is head of pathology at Children's Hospital in Denver. Most 20 years later, Dr. Beckwith is sorry that the name, always intended to be provisional, is still used. He feels the name has caused "misconceptions in scientific literature."

Unlucky Circumstances

The name has stuck, and, unfortunately, the disease itself persists. Beckwith believes that "Medicine will never cure SIDS because it is not a disease but an unlucky set of circumstances that combine to kill

"SIDS is not caused by external suffocation. It is not caused by vomiting and choking. It is not contagious. It does not cause pain or suffering to the infant. It cannot be predicted. It cannot be prevented. Its only symptom is death."

healthy babies."

vertheless, in 1973 SIDS was led in the classification of dis-occurring in the United States, he National Institute of Child h and Human Development (HHD) was given the primary al responsibility for SIDS re-

Contributing to Understanding

scal year 1986 the NICHD orted 138 research grants and acts specifically related to . Areas of study include the de- ing fetus, nervous system de- ment, heart and respiratory rns, body chemical balances, physiology and environmental rns. It isn't expected that any area will provide the answer, ach may contribute to the un- dding of the mechanisms that r these deaths.

S Council

36 it had also become apparent many nonprofit groups, each ting for private funds for SIDS ch, that an umbrella organi-

zation was needed.

"The idea for a SIDS council was born of necessity," said Edith McShane of the National SIDS Foundation in Landover, Maryland. "The various groups were all going to the same individuals, corporations and foundations for money, and these donors finally suggested forming a single SIDS council that could coordinate the research and channel the money to the various groups."

At present six organizations—the National SIDS Foundation, American SIDS Institute in Atlanta, National Center for the Prevention of SIDS in Baltimore, Guild of Infant Survival in Dubuque, Southwest SIDS Institute in Lake Jackson, Texas, and SIDS Resources, Inc., in St. Louis—have all adopted laws of incorporation, elected a board of directors and are currently working on the bylaws which must be unanimously approved.

Every Year

Between 7,000 and 8,000 babies die of SIDS annually in the United States. Such crib deaths occur in all countries, cultures and climates. There is also evidence that SIDS has been with us since antiquity.

Theories Examined

In biblical times it was referred to as "overlying." Then, as in some cultures today, mothers slept with their infants. When a mother woke to find her child dead, she assumed she must have rolled over on the baby, causing its death.

This theory of accidental suffocation is just one of many that have been examined and abandoned after more than 20 years of research projects conducted in hospitals and universities around the country.

Many Questions, Few Answers

Studies have examined the obvious questions and, having eliminated certain factors, are now able to tell us what SIDS is not: SIDS is *not* caused by external suffocation. It is *not* caused by vomiting and choking. It is *not* contagious. It does *not* cause pain or suffering to the infant. It *cannot* be predicted. It *cannot* be prevented. Its only symptom is death.

Subtle Combination

Although the exact cause of SIDS remains elusive, many scientists today are beginning to attribute the syndrome to a combination of subtle physiological deficiencies in the infant, deficiencies so minor that even the most astute pediatrician cannot identify a potential victim.

However, when SIDS babies are studied posthumously, it is beginning to become clear that many, or most, were slightly abnormal in a few special respects, on the very day of birth.

Continued on page 35

In the Midst . . .

"We can rejoice in the midst of sorrow and loneliness."

That sounds naive or at least very idealistic. A year has passed since the death of our two-month-old son from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Upon reflection over the past year, I feel I can now say, "I can rejoice," with a better understanding of the depth of those words.

That does not mean the year has passed easily. There have been times of great loneliness and sadness, and suffering of an intensity that I had never before known. Yet in the midst of it all, I have learned not to wish or pray for the loneliness and hurt to stop or be forgotten. Rather, I try to meet the hurt and the struggle, knowing I am along with the down feelings I have been given many gifts, gifts in which I can rejoice.

Gifts have come to me through many caring and loving people who have wrapped their arms around me, loved me, cried with me, prayed for me, laughed with me. They brought me warm homemade bread, scrubbed my floors, listened to me sing, held my hand and looked me in the eyes with great compassion.

They were truly the community of faith, and I have discovered how great the healing power can be within that community. Also my family—especially my husband Dave, and my two other children, Matthew and Brian—has embraced me with their love and patient understanding even when I was less than sensitive to their needs.

God has given me another very special gift in a friend who has stood by me and loved me and

tive to me, listening to all my
ghts and insecurities. Together
these gifts of rejoicing God has
our arms with another
iful gift—a beautiful baby girl
d Sara Beth. She does not
as a replacement for our son,
s a reminder of how much God
us and how sensitive God is to
needs. As I feed her, bathe her,
her smiles, and watch her
my heart is filled with
ing and great love for our God.
e learned dramatically how
ing and love and caring often
gether.

these are the gifts that I daily
e in, and I recognize each as
a miracle. In a way, I am
ful for my loneliness and loss
urts. For in the midst of them
e discovered love in a greater
asion, making me better able
e and reach out to others.
h loving and reaching out
s being vulnerable, for one
risk and share the hurts and
ness—and all the uncertain-
a life. This is where I find
, who also suffered loneliness
urt.

re, I believe, is the heart of the
l, here where Jesus meets me
fers me comfort and hope.
also know better what the
can do in my life and how
ing cannot be separated from
saving grace in Jesus.
ny heart rises to God with
and thanksgiving and with a
ng, even in the midst of
, that comes from the
st gift and the source of all
gifts—God's incredible love for
d all people.

Sandi Stember Ohlen

“SIDS deaths
can produce
intense and
traumatic
reactions
among
surviving family
members.”

Clues

According to data from the Multicenter Cooperative Epidemiologic Study of SIDS, a federally funded study which began in 1979, it has been determined that on the first day of life SIDS infants have a more rapid heart rate and respiration and are more often ill during their short lives than are other infants.

This ongoing project, which is providing researchers with the most reliable body of epidemiologic information available to date, has found that in the newborn period SIDS infants *may have* abnormalities in reflexes, difficulties in establishing normal sucking and feeding patterns and problems with temperature. Later, many are irritable, have an abnormal cry and decreased muscle tone, show a general lack of vigor and tire easily when feeding.

The study also revealed that crib-death babies were not on a par with control infants in regard to growth and development after birth. The longer they lived the more progressively they fell behind, making it clear that these infants were not thriving as well as had been thought. Because they were smaller in all

"Although the exact cause of SIDS remains elusive, many scientists today are beginning to attribute the syndrome to a combination of subtle physiological deficiencies in the infant, deficiencies so minor that even the most astute pediatrician cannot identify a potential victim."

their dimensions they didn't appear thin, malnourished or dehydrated; it was only when their growth was checked against normal infants that their deficiencies became apparent.

Prenatal Care

The results of this project also reinforce the importance of early prenatal care. SIDS victims studied showed retardation of growth and development prior to birth, confirming the idea that the seeds of SIDS may be planted during intrauterine life.

In low-income communities where infants are often premature; have a low birth weight or are born to mothers who lacked prenatal care, the death rate for SIDS can double the national average.

SIDS deaths can produce intense and traumatic reactions among surviving family members. After the initial shock begins to wear off, parents often find they are left with a prolonged depression. At this point it is often helpful for parents to be put in

touch with a parent or counseling group.

Help for Parents

In 1975 the federal government gave up grants for creation of SIDS education and counseling centers in each state to assist grieving families. Some of the more populous states, such as Illinois, have two centers.

In addition, the National SIDS Foundation has a nationwide network of volunteer chapters that are dedicated to helping parents of SIDS victims. For more information on the location of the chapter nearest you, contact the national SIDS Foundation, Two Metro Plaza, Suite 8200 Professional Place, Landover, MD, 20785, or call 1-800-221-SIDS.

Jean Guarino is a free-lance writer from Oak Park, IL. Her previous article for LWT, "Compassionate Friends," appeared in the April issue.

ABOUT WOMEN

ANN HARRINGTON

Nancy Maeker

As a young girl in Meyersville, Pa., Nancy Maeker was active in the Lutheran and Mission Band. She heard a lot about mission work. She recalls, "My goal then was to be a missionary, go to some foreign land, and work."

Now 43, Maeker finds herself involved in cross-cultural ministry, but closer to home than she had imagined: she and her husband, are copastors of Faith Community Lutheran Church, a mission congregation in southwest Dallas.

With Community began in 1961 through the efforts of the Maekers and a pastor who serves a congregation in Chicago. The congregation is built behind previous Lutheran tradition which ended when surrounding neighborhood

moved from predominately white to black. Faith Community is a tri-cultural ministry: about 75 percent members are black, 15 percent white, and 10 percent are African American.

Of 160 baptized members, only 10 families in the congregation were previously Lutheran. Worship


includes black gospel and Hispanic music, as well as the songs of Africa and the hymns of *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Nancy Maeker, a former music teacher and choir director, says, "We work hard to marry black culture and the Lutheran worship form. It's probably very similar to what Martin Luther did" in his efforts to bring the worship experience closer to the people. In services she plays the piano and a black member, who is blind, plays the organ. "He adds the soul," Maeker says. "I add

the structure."

Her call to the ordained ministry came gradually. She recalls that as a student at Texas Lutheran College in Seguin, in the early 1960s, she attended a theological conference and thought, "If women could be ordained, I would do that."

But the American

Lutheran Church (ALC) did not ordain women until 1970. During her husband's seminary years at Wartburg in Dubuque, Iowa, and his first call, to Stonewall, Texas, Maeker taught school and commuted to Austin for a Master of Music degree.



"We work hard to marry black culture and the Lutheran worship form."

Continued on next page

In 1973 she attended a Lutheran music conference that proved to be a door opener. Subsequently, she served on the ALC review committee for *Lutheran Book of Worship*, wrote for *Alleluia*, a curriculum series on worship, music and the arts, and from 1978 to 1984 was district representative to the board of the ALC Division for Life and Mission in the Congregation.

Maeker sensed that something was shifting. "The most exciting doors that were opening for me were in the church, not in the school."

She thought about seminary, but Victoria, Texas, where she then lived, was out of commuting range. Then her husband was called to Austin, and Maeker eventually became a Master of Divinity candidate in Wartburg's Hispanic Ministries program there. She and Rod began cross-cultural training for their Dallas assignment while she was still in seminary, and she was ordained before she graduated.

As a pastor's wife, worship leader,

and a pastor, Nancy Maeker occasionally encounters people who recognize only *some* of those roles. Though she says, "I never wear a clergy collar," she has donned it once or twice to make a point.

She is mother to three children: Beth, a freshman at Texas Lutheran; Paul, 15; and Jeremy, eight years old. She describes their family life as "a juggling act, trying to support their activities," and admits, "It doesn't work all the time." She tries to remember the advice of Pastor Steinke, the clergy counselor, who says, "The question is not, 'Did I have a good mother?' but 'Did I have a *good enough* mother?'"

Maeker says, "There are no shortcuts to doing cross-cultural work. It takes time, lots of hard work, lots of hard work by the Holy Spirit." As she reflects, she wouldn't have it any other way. "I would have a difficult time living in a one-culture atmosphere. There is a richness in living with people of many cultures. I would not want to be devoid of it."

Ann Shilling

Profile of a church youth worker: energetic, enthusiastic, dedicated, friendly. Ann Shilling, director of youth ministry at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Plano, Texas, is all of the above, but she's more than just a happy face.

"I'm no Pied Piper," she says, smiling. "I'm not a person who wants to stay a kid all my life. Having fun with kids is different from ministry to and with them."

Carol Leber, director of Christian education at Resurrection, says that Shilling's commitment to ministry

sets her apart. Instead of thinking "Let's do this with the youth," she says, "Let's do this *for* the youth," Shilling's approach is "How can I help the youth meet their needs, how can we develop their ministry?"

A graduate of Texas Lutheran College with a major in social work, Shilling took a year off from school to be a youth staffer in Willmar, Minnesota, for the Lutheran Church in America, a predecessor of the ELCA. The skills she picked up there, plus her educational background, provided a practical base for her ministry.

he's careful not to impose an agenda on the groups she works in. "It's really important to me that what we do is what they want to do. If it's not their idea, it won't work," she explains. "The kids make choices. I delegate the responsibilities among the kids and the parents, and check to see that it all gets done."

That's not to say that youth programming should be done by popular vote. Shilling is wary of the "numbers game," in which church programs are judged successful (or not) by the number of participants they attract. "What is the role of the church?" she asks rhetorically.

Large numbers are not usually a priority in building relationships. To be a Christian is to deal with the worst in yourself. We go to church, we dress up in our best clothes and smile at everyone there. We're really called upon to deal with the worst, to deal with each other's problems and pain."

Shilling's learning to accept what she can't get done, and appreciates being in an environment where it's very much OK to forgive mistakes.

Church work is a family tradition for the Shillings: Ann's grandfather was a pastor in eastern Pennsylvania and helped found the Lutheran church in York and Gettysburg. Her mother is also an ordained minister, and Shilling currently serves as executive di-

rector of the Capitol City Council of Churches in Albany, New York. Her mother is director of Christian education for a Methodist congregation, and she has a brother in seminary.

The other side of commitment, of course, is burnout. Youth workers may be particularly susceptible. "So much is expected," Shilling says.

"You need to be an administrator, care-giver, programmer. It's a really, really big responsibility." She has not been immune to the pressures.

Shilling, 26, tries to maintain a balance in her life. "When I'm not at work, I don't work," she says. "Sometimes when you're a church worker you need



"How can I help the youth meet their needs?"

to be intentional about getting away from it." She plays soccer, goes dancing, and takes time to talk with friends (talk, not counsel, she emphasizes). Many of her friends, like many people in their twenties, aren't active in the church. Shilling is philosophical about this situation, noting that many young people come back to the church when they have children of their own, or when they recognize in themselves "a sense of something missing."

So how do Shilling's "unchurched" friends react to her occupation? "They don't tell dirty jokes around me," she laughs, "and guys usually 'mind their manners' on dates."

Ann Harrington is production editor of LWT.

Confirmation Revisited

Peggy Adair

I was helping my son Brandon work on his final confirmation project, a two-page paper on "How I See Myself as a Member of the Church Ten Years from Now." As though any 13-year-old kid thinks beyond spring break, let alone 10 years hence!

As Brandon wandered off to think and write his required two pages, my thoughts turned to my own confirmation class. Ours was a small church (*all* Lutheran churches in Oklahoma are small, it seems), and we had a confirmation class of six. We met in our pastor's home every Saturday morning at 9:30. Confirmation class was boring. That much hasn't changed, Brandon tells me.

We had to memorize a lot, and the only thing I really remember about confirmation is how I mispronounced *covet* when I recited the Ten Commandments.

I also remember Steve Donahue. Steve was not what you would call a real scholar. Steve was sort of, well, Steve was a great car mechanic. He was a tall, lanky, likable kid, kinda blondish, and he had big bucky front teeth that held your attention when you looked at him. He was real quiet, he never argued any points of theol-

ogy (unlike me), and he rarely showed up for confirmation class at all. When he did appear, he stumbled through one or two lines of the Apostles' Creed, then would murmur something about "working on it."

Those of us who diligently studied at night with Luther's *Small Catechism* did not disparage Steve because of his catechismal shortcomings. Instead we rather admired his ability to appear so serious, so determined, so apologetic, and so damn-care all at the same time.

Steve somehow met Pastor's approval and was confirmed along with the rest of us. I still have the picture of the six of us—dressed in our white robes, limp carnations pinned to the left shoulders, acne-spotted faces beaming bashfully for the camera. It is a picture of budding adulthood, expectations and hope amidst childhood and adolescent awkwardness.

How would my confirmation class have completed Brandon's assignment? Would I have guessed that at 23 I would be newly married, with a few responsibilities, very happy in my one-bedroom apartment? Could I anticipate that for a while of my life this time I would put church on the "back burner"?

And what of Steve Donahue's dreams? His name is inscribed in the confirmation book and on the



a War Memorial in Washington, Steve Donahue, born in Oklahoma in 1949, died in Vietnam 19 years later.

and now my son, and a bunch of other sons (1973 was a great year for babies) and a few outnumbered daughters will stand up in their confirmation robes. And the girls will smile and the boys will try to, while the photographer attempts to capture all of them in a moment of peace.

Most of this confirmation class is female, a fact of significant note because right now the United States as a country is holding on doggedly, but increasingly, to an era of "relative

peace." I hope we continue to do so. I hope all the little two-page homilies these kids write about their futures come true. I hope they live to tell their own kids about how they once struggled through confirmation class, but they survived. And oh, yeah, it was sooooo boring, but I guess altogether it was tolerable.

Confirmation is a growing-up time. And growing up is kinda nice. Growing up in peace, at home, surrounded by those who love you, is the best kind of nice.

Peggy Adair, Omaha, NE, is a foster parent, juvenile justice specialist, and free-lance writer.



Resource for Thanks-giving

JOSEFINA NIEVES LEBRÓN

In the United States Virgin Islands, groups of believers gather several times a year for what they call a "Thanky-sangy" celebration, in which hymn singing and prayers are combined to thank the Creator. Most of the hymns are known by heart. Members of different Christian denominations take part, turning the event into an ecumenical thanks-giving opportunity.

In Puerto Rico, soda pop cans are traditionally collected beforehand, washed, wrapped and turned into coin banks. They are then distributed among the women in the congregation. Participants are asked to fill the cans daily by adding an offering, along with a thanks-giving prayer. On a set date, this special offering is gathered. The people present the cans as an offering, and participants get back empty ones for the next thanks-giving service.

Music and hymns are used to close the thanks-giving celebration. Hymns can be suggested by the group.

The Thankoffering service presented here combines Puerto Rican and U.S. Virgin Islands traditions. The hymns mentioned come from *Sacred Songs and Solos (SS&S)*, a hymnbook used by many islanders, and *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)*.



er: May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, his love and the Holy
be with us all now. In peace and joy let us pray and praise the Lord.
regation: It is proper to give thanks for God's everflowing kindness
d us.

t us give thanks to God for the opportunity, every day, to experience
reatness of His work.

s proper to give thanks to God.

t us sing together "All People that on Earth Do Dwell" (SS&S 9, or
245).

e First Lesson is from 2 Chronicles 30:22b-27. (*The lesson is read.*)

s proper to give thanks to God.

r the opportunity given to us to share the treasure of your mission, O
we give you thanks.

t us pray.

viously selected persons or volunteers may give thanks for the gifts the
i gives to women, families and congregations all over the world.)

ear our prayer, O Lord.

t us give thanks to God.

e Second Lesson is from Psalm 100. (*The lesson is read.*)

rd, you are good.

ve us wisdom to reveal you to others through our deeds and works, as
s by our words.

e ask for your guidance to present the gospel in such a way that it
es women, men and children.

ear our prayer, O Lord.

t us lift our hearts to God in prayer by singing "Jesus, Thy Boundless
to Me" (SS&S 63) or "Praise and Thanksgiving," (LBW 409).

e Gospel According to Luke, Chapter 17, verses 11-19. (*The gospel
is read.*)

t us give thanks for the good news that enables us to proclaim to the
and the hurting the love of God, here and abroad.

is proper to give thanks to God, Our Lord.



L: Let us celebrate the active presence of people in all walks of life. Let us celebrate the participation of women active in mission, women who have shown God's rich love.

C: Let us celebrate with those who have discovered that participation makes the difference.

L: Allow us, God, to see that we need not be divided—women from men, lay from clergy, young from old, one against each other—but let us discover a common framework for our mission.

C: Lord, hear our prayers.

L: Let us sing "Come, You Thankful People, Come," SS&S 1055 or LBW 407 (or another song of the group's choice.)

(Note: If a meditation or brief sermon is to be included in the service, it can be given here. The thankofferings are received. As the participants bring their offerings to the altar, a thanks-giving hymn can be used.)

L: Let us pray. God, to you we bring these offerings, a fraction of all that you have given us in your kindness without end. We thank you for the freedom we enjoy to worship you, and to tell others about your love for all your children. Our hearts are full of joy for the opportunity for all people to answer yes to your call—both male and female, lay and clergy, and all ethnic groups on the face of the earth. Accept these gifts as a sample of our gratitude and of our desire to continue working for your kingdom.

L: Lord in your mercy.

C: Hear our prayers.

L: Lord, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, send us your Holy Spirit that with the Spirit's power we can continue recognizing and using the gifts we have received. So that we can one day, not far from now, all may celebrate the perfect joy of being in your presence.

C: Amen.

L: Let us sing the closing hymn: "For Christ and the Church," SS&S 1056 (or another of the group's choice).



Servicio de acción de gracias

JOSEFINA NIEVES LEBRÓN

En las Islas Vírgenes americanas, algunos grupos de creyentes se organizan para celebrar el "Tanky-Sangy". El entonar himnos y el elevar oraciones de gracias son los medios utilizados por grupos de varias denominaciones cristianas, que en más de una ocasión al año se reúnen en acción de gracias. Por ser ya una tradición, muchos de los himnos y cánticos, se aprenden de memoria por los isleños.

En Puerto Rico, con anticipación a la fecha del servicio de acción de gracias, se acumulan latas vacías de refrescos o gaseosas, se lavan y se decoran como alcancías. Las mismas son distribuidas entre las mujeres de la congregación. A los recipientes de estas alcancías se les indica que deben colocar su ofrenda de gracias acompañada de una oración, diariamente. Al llegar la fecha pre-determinada para ser devueltas, se prepara el servicio corto.

Este servicio que aquí presentamos, puede ser usado para dicha ocasión. Asimismo, hemos tratado de combinar ambas tradiciones la de Puerto Rico y las Islas Vírgenes. Los himnos señalados para la versión de habla inglesa, son tomados del libro "Sacred Songs and Solos," que por años los grupos de las Islas Vírgenes han utilizado. Una versión de dicho libro no está en castellano. No obstante, muchos de los himnos están incluidos en versiones similares de himnos protestantes. Además se han sugerido algunos himnos del *Culto Cristiano*.



Líder: Que la gracia de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, su amor y el Espíritu Santo sea con todos nosotros. En paz y gozo oremos al Señor.

Congregación: Es propio darle gracias, por su abundante bondad para con nosotros.

L: Demos gracias a Dios por la oportunidad que diariamente nos da de experimentar la grandeza de Su trabajo.

C: Es propio darle gracias a Dios.

L: Cantemos el himno 183 "Gloria al Señor" (*Culto Cristiano*).

L: La Primera Lección se encuentra en 2 Crónicas 30:22b-27. Es propio darle gracias a Dios.

C: Por la oportunidad que nos das de compartir el tesoro de su misión, oh Señor, te damos gracias.

L: Oremos.

(Una persona seleccionada de antemano y otros voluntarios darán gracias por los dones que el Espíritu ha derramado sobre las mujeres, las familias y las congregaciones y en el mundo.)

C: Escúchanos, oh Señor.

L: Demos gracias a Dios.

L: La Segunda Lección es tomado del Salmo 100 (*Fe lee salmo.*). Demos gracias a Dios.

C: Danos sabiduría para poder revelar a otros, mediante nuestras acciones así como con nuestras palabras, lo que acabamos de oír.

L: Pedimos nos concedas tu guía de modo que llevemos el Evangelio de forma que niños, hombres y mujeres sean positivamente impactados en el desarrollo de tu misión.

C: Escucha nuestra oración, oh Señor.

L: Elevemos nuestros corazones a nuestro Padre, con una oración, cantando el himno "De boca y corazón," (193 *Culto Cristiano*).

L: El Evangelio según San Lucas, capítulo 17:11-19.

Demos gracias por las buenas nuevas que nos ayuda a proclamar el amor de Dios a los pobres y los dolidos, que viven cerca o lejos de nosotros.

C: Es propio darle gracias a Dios, nuestro Señor.

L: Celebremos la participación activa del pueblo de Dios en los quehaceres diarios. Celebremos la participación de la mujeres en la misión, pues ellas han demostrado el inmenso amor de Dios.

C: Celebremos alegremente con aquellos que han descubierto que la participación hace la gran diferencia.



permítenos Señor el reconocer que no necesitamos estar divididos, entre re y mujeres, laicos y clero, viejos y jóvenes, unos contra los otros, sino escubramos un marco de trabajo común en nuestra labor misionera.ucha nuestra oración, oh Señor.

haber una meditación, o una breve homilia puede incluirse en este o. Una vez terminada la meditación corta, se reciben las ofrendas de ud. Conforme los participantes traen al frente sus ofrendas en una ión continua, se entona un himno de acción de gracias. "Alabraré a ñor" puede ser sugerido.)

emos. Dios y Padre Celestial, a Ti traemos estas ofrendas: una ón de todo lo que Tú, en tu inmensa bondad nos has brindado. Te s gracias por la libertad que disfrutamos de adorarte y compartir con tu amor para con todos los habitantes de esta tierra. ¡Cuanto gozo y a hay en nuestro corazón, por la oportunidad de que todos podamos nder a tu llamado tanto hombres como mujeres, clérigos y laicos, y nas de todas las razas que poblan este mundo! Acepta esta muestra titud y nuestro deseo de continuar laborando en tu reino. *(Oraciones táneas pueden ser incluídas aquí.)*

ñor en tu bondad,
ucha nuestra oración.

ñor, Creador, Redentor y Santificador, evíanos tu Santo Espíritu para on su poder podamos continuar reconociendo y utilizando los dones dos, a fin de que algún día podamos celebrar la alegría perfecta de n tu presencia; por tu Hijo Jesucrito, te lo imploramos.
én.

o de cierre. 195 "Alma, bendice al Señor" *(Culto Cristiano.)*

a. Josefina Nieves Lebrón ocupa la posición de directora asociada el desarrollo de las misiones en la Comisión para Ministerios Multicul- s de la I.E.L.A. La autora se ha destacado como líder dentro de la u Luterana. En los años de servicio con la iglesia, Nieves Lebrón ha ado y alentado el crecimiento espiritual, emocional y físico del ser no. Nació en San Juan, Puerto Rico, y en la actualidad reside en go.



SEPTEMBER

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	Labor Day Lutheran women pray, noon
6	Jane Addams, social reformer, b. 1860
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	Parish Education Sunday
12	Lutheran women pray, noon
13	
14	Holy Cross Day
15	
16	
17	
18	Lutheran Schools Sunday
19	Lutheran women pray, noon
20	International Day of Peace
21	Yom Kippur
22	
23	
24	
25	
26	Lutheran women pray, noon
27	
28	
29	
30	
31	

Editor's Notes

On a beautiful sunny day in mid-August, 1979, my husband Paul and I drove through the hills of northwestern Wisconsin. It was the father's funeral procession. As the cars wound their way through the green land, farmers in the field paused in respect as cars passed.

A funeral procession is an unusual image to illustrate the phrase we highlight this month from the Women of the ELCA's purpose statement: "*We commit ourselves to promote healing and wholeness.*" Yet that is the very picture Phyllis Kersten introduced in this month's lead article, and am struck by its appropriateness.

Because of our brokenness—because sickness, death, poverty, ignorance, injustice, oppression, pollution, and hunger are a part of our lives and our world—we must be *committed* to the promotion of health and wholeness. As Jesus was.

As we study the book of Mark in our Bible study, *Arise to Life*, we see Christ, the healer. Christ, who wept, mourned, suffered, approached death with trepidation, died and rose again to save us from our ultimate brokenness—sin.

And so we pause as the funeral procession passes by, symbol of our brokenness, symbol of our wholeness only through Jesus, the Christ.

We are called to comfort and share the grief of all who mourn, whatever reason, whatever loss. In her article Kersten suggests that we are also called, as Jesus was, to

ent premature death. To cure
ake better when it is possible,
re and comfort when it is not.
sus cried, "Ephphatha! Be
ed!" and the man with a speech
hearing impediment was
ed. Do we hear? Do we speak?
we open to the many ways we
promote health and whole-
?"

hat of our personal health and
eness—emotionally, spiritually,
ically? Do we care for our
es as a temple of the Lord? Do
urture and learn from our
ionships, as writers Susan
s ("Lessons") and Marilyn
n ("Letter to My Mother")
el in their articles? Is our spiri-
health shown through "growth
th and mission"?

a community of Christians we
work together toward health
wholeness in the church, the
y and the world. Wholeness
ugh inclusiveness and ecumen-
partnership. Health through
efforts toward "peace, justice
he integrity of creation."

And so we pause as the funeral
ssion passes by, but we do not
grieve, we comfort, and we
mit ourselves to the promotion
health and wholeness.

Lue Edison-Swift
EDITORIAL SPECIALIST

PREVIEW

IN THE CHURCH

Bertha von Craigh expands our view of what (and where) "in the church" is, as she reflects on the Women of the ELCA purpose statement.

TOO MUCH

WORK Overwork in the church (whether you're a paid professional or a volunteer) is, alas, alive and well. What is work-aholism, and why is it a special danger in the church?

SPIRITUAL

SEEKINGS What is spirituality? Where do individuals go to find spiritual support and nourishment in their lives today?

CHURCH

SEEKING Two articles explore the challenge of finding a new church home.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Notice a difference? After much consideration, consultation, and evaluation, LWT announces a new, more readable typeface—New Century Schoolbook. We think it's an improvement and hope you agree.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz0123456789

*As a community of women
created in the image of God,
called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and
empowered by the Holy Spirit,*

*We commit ourselves to
grow in faith,
affirm our gifts,
support one another in our callings,
engage in ministry and action, and
promote healing and wholeness
in the church, the society,
and the world.*

**Purpose Statement,
Women of the ELCA**

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